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**SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS  
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

February 1985

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of  
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

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PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are Eunice Charles, Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, Greta Holtz, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, and Rachel Warner.

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East/Central  
Africa/Southern  
Africa

Zaire/Angola

06/02/85 Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos arrives in Kinshasa on his first official visit to Zaire. Presidents dos Santos and Mobutu hold discussions on bilateral, African, and world issues. Relations between Zaire and Angola have been cool, due in part to Mobutu's suspected support of UNITA guerrillas fighting against the Angolan regime. Dos Santos hopes to eliminate or at least reduce this support by improving relations with Zaire.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia

00/02/85 The population of Hararge Province in southern Ethiopia is reportedly threatened by famine. The drought problem in this province, which is predominantly inhabited by ethnic Somalis, has not received the same media coverage as have problems in the more populous northern and western provinces. Hararge is described as being in a stage of "pre-disaster." The region has not had rain for 22 months and if it does not rain in the next 6 months, livestock will die and there will be mass starvation. Famine victims are beginning to pour into towns in search of food. There may be mass refugee movements across the Somali-Ethiopian border, depending on where food is available.

00/03/85 The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) reports that Ethiopian fighter jets attack three TPLF-held towns in central and western Tigray during February. The TPLF celebrates its tenth anniversary.

Kenya

13/02/85 Nairobi University is closed following a week of student unrest in which 1 student is killed and 65 injured. The students were protesting the expulsion of 3 students and the withdrawal of scholarships of 5 others without explanation on 6 February. They also demanded the release of 4 students who are imprisoned for having supported the August 1982 coup attempt. The government's heavy-handed actions to suppress student political activity will likely only increase student hostility.

Somalia

07/02/85 President Siad Barre states he is willing to normalize relations with the Soviet Union providing it is willing to

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reciprocate. The Soviet Union's embassy in Mogadishu has had only a skeleton staff since relations broke down during the 1977-78 Ogaden war with Ethiopia. Barre's overture to the Soviets apparently signals his dissatisfaction with the continued low level of US military assistance. He describes relations with the US as "limping."

00/03/85 Dissident Radio Halgan reports four minor attacks on Somali government troops by the Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS) during February. These reports cannot be verified.

Sudan

04/02/85 Sudan is suffering from widespread bread and fuel shortages due to a delay in the shipment of wheat and flour under the US PL480 food aid program and a lack of foreign exchange to pay for petroleum imports. The scarcity of necessities is more acute in the southern areas, where virtually all agricultural activity has ceased. In response to these shortages, student riots break out and the Sudanese government orders all universities in Khartoum to close. President Numeiri's inability to supply basic necessities illustrates the country's depressed domestic conditions and Sudanese discontent with the inefficient economic policies of the current government.

19/02/85 The United States suspends nearly \$200 million in economic assistance to Sudan. The decision is a result of American disappointment over the deterioration of the Sudanese economy and the enduring conflict in southern Sudan between government troops and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. It represents the reconsideration of American policy toward Sudan, particularly in view of President Numeiri's Islamization policies. Although Numeiri expressed his disapproval of the American measure, he has recently instituted a devaluation of the Sudanese pound in an attempt to provide the United States and other international donors, such as the IMF and Saudi Arabia, with tangible evidence of his willingness to follow external advice to redress domestic economic problems.

22/02/85 The famine in West Sudan, particularly Dafur Province, is becoming more acute. The lack of adequate rainfall is destroying the annual grain crop, creating further difficulties for the livestock industry. The worsening situation in West Sudan is another serious problem for the

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Numeiri government. A severe refugee crisis along the Ethiopian-Sudanese border and the southern insurgency compound Sudan's internal problems.

Indian Ocean Islands

Madagascar

31/01/85 An Italian priest living in Madagascar is robbed, tortured, and decapitated. He is the second foreign missionary to be killed in Madagascar in a year. It is thought that those who killed him want to intimidate the influential Christian churches in the country which are critical of the regime's Socialist option and relations with the Soviet Union.

Sahel

Chad

09/02/85 Two American employees of Exxon Corporation are kidnapped in southern Chad only 2 days after the company announced it was resuming oil exploration there. The hostages are released 4 days later following negotiations conducted by Exxon. Diplomats in Ndjamena say it is not clear whether the incident was the work of those opposed to the government of President Hissene Habre, but rebel forces have recently been active in both southern and northern Chad.

Southern Africa

Angola

22/02/85 The UNITA rebel movement appears to be overreaching its military capacity and is showing signs of internal dissent. Rebel leader Jonas Savimbi's determination to achieve impressive military successes has met with opposition from field commanders who fear he is pushing the guerrilla offensive ahead too far and too fast. Recent tensions within UNITA are reflected in the rebels' acknowledgment of a setback in plans to advance toward Luanda, open disenchantment over closer US ties with the Angolan Government and uncertainty about the status of top guerrilla leaders. UNITA has not achieved its declared aim of inserting 20,000 guerrillas into Luanda Province by the end of 1984; so far only about 7,000 men are in the province.

Mozambique

05/02/85 A French delegation led by Minister of Cooperation Christian Nucci arrives in Maputo to discuss possibilities for Mozambican and French economic cooperation, including accords related to food aid and economic development. This

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is another in a series of continuing contacts with the West on the part of the FRELIMO regime.

Mozambique/South Africa

08/02/85 South African and Mozambican representatives meet for talks on the Nkomati Accord signed on 16 March 1984 between Maputo and Pretoria. Mozambican Minister of National Security Sergio Veira accuses South Africa of violating the accord by continuing to support the rebel group. Although South Africa denies the charge, RENAMO'S continuing attacks are an indication that the organization is receiving significant support from one or more sources.

Mozambique/Zimbabwe

06/02/85 A Mozambican defense delegation headed by Minister of National Security Sergio Veira holds talks in Harare with Zimbabwean security officials. Zimbabwe has troops stationed in Mozambique to help guard the oil pipeline from Zimbabwe to the Mozambican port of Beira and the highway linking Zimbabwe through Mozambique's Tete Province. Both the pipeline and the road have been targets for attacks by RENAMO guerrillas.

South Africa

01/02/85 Joe Slovo, Chief of Staff of the ANC's military wing, says in his first interview with a Western news organization that the ANC is not ready to lay down its arms in return for talks with the South African Government and plans to intensify its sabotage campaign inside South Africa. Slovo strongly denied recent reports that the ANC is planning to attack white civilian targets, but he said the movement would step up assaults against South African police and soldiers. Slovo, a Communist who left South Africa 22 years ago, is portrayed by South African authorities as the white master terrorist who has manipulated the largely black ANC toward Marxist ends.

03/02/85 Speaking at his installation as the first black Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, Nobel laureate Desrond M. Tutu offers to act as a mediator between the South African government and the ANC. Bishop Tutu added that he favors increased foreign investment in South Africa under stringent conditions but that if apartheid is not being "actively dismantled" within 18 months to 2 years, he will join the growing call for divestiture.

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- 11/02/85 Imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela rejects the offer made by President P.W. Botha on 31 January to release him if he renounces violence as a political instrument. Mr. Mandela responded to the conditional offer in a statement which called on Botha to lift the ban on the ANC, liberate political prisoners, and allow free political expression. The statement was read by Mandela's daughter, Zinzi Mandela.
- 18/02/85 South Africa drops its case against a leading Roman Catholic prelate, Archbishop Denis Hurley of Natal, who had been charged with falsely accusing the special police unit "Koevoet" of committing atrocities in Namibia. Many observers believe the case was dropped because Hurley had evidence to substantiate his charges.
- 19/02/85 Security police arrest nearly the entire top leadership of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in predawn raids in the main cities of South Africa. Of 13 UDF leaders taken from their homes, 6 are charged with treason and the others are detained for interrogation. The six leaders charged with treason include a president of the UDF, Albertina Sisulu, wife of Walter Sisulu, imprisoned former general secretary of the ANC. The others are Sam Kikine and Isaac Ngcobo of the South African Allied Workers Union; Ismael Mohamed of the Transvaal branch of the UDF; Frank Chikane, a vice president of the UDF; and Cassim Saloojee of the Transvaal Indian Congress. These six will join eight other UDF leaders charged with high treason in December, setting the scene for a major trial that is due to start in Durban on 29 March.
- 22/02/85 South Africa's only nuclear power station is closed because of flaws in water-carrying stainless steel pipes. The Koeberg Plant, which supplies about one-tenth of South Africa's electricity, may be closed several months.

Zimbabwe

- 20/02/85 Zimbabwe's first post-independence general election, due by next month, has been postponed until mid-year. Justice Minister Eddison Zvobogo cited difficulties in registering voters and drawing up constituency boundaries.

West Africa

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Equatorial Guinea

24/02/85 At least 500 laborers recruited from Nigeria and smuggled into Equatorial Guinea to work the cocoa plantations revolt to protest harsh working conditions. The protesting workers who sought refuge in the Nigerian Embassy after scuffling with local police were to be transported back to Nigeria in aircraft dispatched from Nigeria. The army of Equatorial Guinea harshly suppressed a similar disturbance in 1976 after which most of the Nigerians living in Equatorial Guinea fled.

Gambia

18/02/85 President Dawda Jawara lifts the 4-year state of emergency in time for the 20th anniversary of the nation's independence which was attended by Nigerian head of state General Muhammed Buhari. The state of emergency was declared following the attempted coup of 1981.

Ghana

02/02/85 Several plotters including retired Major Suleiman Abu Bakar and Alhaji Mohammad Abass attempt to assassinate Head of State Jerry Rawlings on 31 January during an Asante festival in Kumasi. The plot is foiled either by unexpectedly large crowds or the fact that Rawlings, perhaps forewarned, arrived later than anticipated. News of a subsequent meeting of the conspirators on 2 February 1985 in a Kumasi house is leaked to authorities who storm and later destroy the site.

15/02/85 Following a 5-day meeting of the Intergovernmental Joint Commission for Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation, the governments of Ghana and Cuba sign an agreement promoting greater cooperation between the two countries. By the terms of the agreement, Cuba will provide technical assistance for Ghana's fishing and sugar industries, provide basic medical care for some rural areas, offer scholarships to Ghanaian students, and train Ghanaian coaches. Other areas of cooperation include banking, transport, communications, and trade.

Ivory Coast

12/02/85 The five presidents of the Entente Council states (Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Niger, and Burkina Faso) meet in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, for their annual summit conference. This summit was the first attended by President Thomas Sankara of Burkina Fasso, and it was the first time

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that the Burkinabe chief of state visited Ivory Coast since coming to power in a coup in August 1983. The informal agenda included discussions on regional economic problems resulting, in part, from the protracted drought. As is usual with Entente Council summits, there was little overt controversy.

12/02/85 A bomb exploded in the quarters reserved for President Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso 3 days prior to his arrival in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast, for the annual meeting of the Entente Council states. It is not known who planted the bomb, however rumors circulating in Abidjan suggest that Sankara himself was responsible. Presumably he sought to embarrass President Houphouet-Boigny by revealing the inadequacy of local security on the occasion of an international summit conference.

Sao Tome and

Principe

14/02/85 Presidents of all five Lusophone African countries (Sao Tome and Principe, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique) hold their fifth summit conference in Sao Tome. The purpose of the summit was, according to its chairman, President Joao Bernardo Vieira of Guinea Bissau, to promote cooperation among the five states whose similar colonial heritage fostered common problems.

Togo

22/02/85 President Gnassingbe Eyadema announces that parliamentary elections will be held on 24 March; they will be the first since 1979. In line with his new "democratization" policy, several candidates will be allowed in each constituency although the ruling Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais (RPT) is still the only legal party.